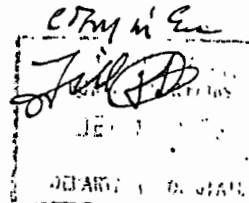
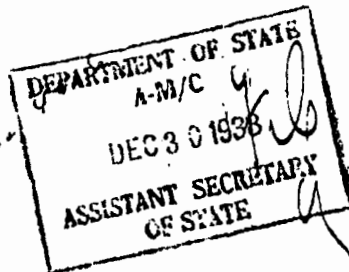


Voluntary; political.

Strictly confidential



ANTI-SEMITIC ONSLAUGHT IN GERMANY AS SEEN  
FROM LEIPZIG.

Doc. 21

From:

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Date of Preparation: November 21, 1938.

Date of Forwarding: To be carried to Berlin by trusted messenger as soon as practicable.

Approved:

Ralph C. Busser  
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American Consul General.

86-4016/2013

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The following resume of the anti-Semitic onslaught in Germany insofar as this consular district is concerned, constitutes a narration of Leipzig angles as to this flagitious attack upon a helpless minority that very probably has had no counterpart in the course of the civilized world. The macabre circumstances that form the subject matter of this report had a fittingly gruesome prelude in Leipzig a few hours before they occurred in the form of rites held on one of the principal squares of the city on the night of November 9, 1938 in commemoration of fallen martyrs to the Nazi cause prior to the political take-over in 1933. To such end apparently anything in the corpse category that could be remotely associated with Nazi martyrdom, had been exhumed. At least five year old remains of those who had been considered rowdyish violators of law and order at the time, had been placed in extravagant coffins; arranged around a colossal, flaming urn on the Altermarkt for purposes of display, and ultimately conveyed amid marching troops, flaring torches and funereal music to the "Ehrenhain", Leipzig's National Socialistic burial plot. For this propagandistic ceremony the entire market place had been surrounded with wooden lattice work about ten yards high. This was covered with white cloth to form the background for black swastikas at least five yards high and broad. Flame-spurting urns and gigantic banners completed a Wagnerian ensemble as to pomposity of stage setting; but it can not be truthfully reported that the ceremony aroused anything akin to awe among the crowds who witnessed it. Judging from a few very

guardedly whispered comments, the populace was far more concerned over the wanton waste of materials in these days when textiles of any kind are exceedingly scarce and expensive, rather than being actuated by any particularly reverent emotions. On the other hand for obvious reasons, there were no open manifestations of disapproval. The populace was destined to be much more perturbed the following morning during the course of the most violent debacle the city had probably ever witnessed.

The shattering of shop windows, looting of stores and dwellings of Jews which began in the early hours of November 10, 1938, was hailed subsequently in the Nazi press as "a spontaneous wave of righteous indignation throughout Germany, as a result of the cowardly Jewish murder of Third Secretary von Rath in the German Embassy at Paris." Insofar as a very high percentage of the German populace is concerned, a state of popular indignation that would spontaneously lead to such excesses, can be considered as non-existent. On the contrary, in viewing the ruins and attendant measures employed, all of the local crowds observed were obviously benumbed over what had happened and aghast over the unprecedented fury of Nazi acts that had been or were taking place with bewildering rapidity throughout their city. The whole lamentable affair was organized in such a sinister fashion, as to lend credence to the theory that the execution of it had involved studied preparation. It has been ascertained by this

office that the plan of "spontaneous indignation" leaked out in Leipzig several hours before news of the death of Third Secretary von Rath had been broadcasted at 10 P.M. November 10, 1938. It is stated upon authority believed to be reliable, that most of the evening was employed in drawing up lists of fated victims. Several persons known to this office were aware at 9 P.M. on the evening of November 9, 1938 that the "spontaneous" outrage was scheduled for that night sometime after midnight and several of such persons interviewed, stayed up purposely in order to witness it.

At 3 A.M. November 10, 1938 was unleashed a barrage of Nazi ferocity as had had no equal hitherto in Germany, or very likely anywhere else in the world since savagery, if ever. Jewish dwellings were smashed into and contents demolished or looted. In one of the Jewish sections an eighteen year old boy was hurled from a three story window to land with both legs broken on a street littered with burning beds and other household furniture and effects from his family's and other apartments. This information was supplied by an attending physician. It is reported from another quarter that among domestic effects thrown out of a Jewish dwelling, a small dog descended four flights to a broken spine on a cluttered street. Although apparently centered in poor districts, the raid was not confined to the humble classes. One apartment of exceptionally refined occupants known to this office, was violently ransacked, presumably in a search for valuables that was not in vain, and one of the marauders thrust a cane through a priceless mediaeval painting portraying a biblical scene. Another apartment of the same category

is known to have been turned upside down in the frenzied course of whatever the invaders were after. Reported loss by looting of cash, silver, jewelry, and otherwise easily convertible articles, have been frequent.

Jewish shop windows by the hundreds were systematically and wantonly smashed throughout the entire city at a loss estimated at several millions of marks. There are reports that substantial losses have been sustained on the famous Leipzig "Bruhl", as many of the shop windows at the time of the demolition were filled with costly furs that were seized before the windows could be boarded up. In proportion to the general destruction of real estate, however, losses of goods are felt to have been relatively small. The spectators who viewed the wreckage when daylight had arrived were mostly in such a bewildered mood, that there was no danger of impulsive acts, and the perpetrators probably were too busy in carrying out their schedule to take off a whole lot of time for personal profit. At all events, the main streets of the city were a positive litter of shattered plate glass. According to reliable testimony, the debacle was executed by S. S. men and Storm Troopers not in uniform, each group having been provided with hammers, axes, crow-bars and incendiary bombs.

Three synagogues in Leipzig were fired simultaneously by incendiary bombs and all sacred objects and records desecrated or destroyed, in most instances hurled through the windows and burned in the streets. No attempts whatsoever were made to quench the fires, functions of the fire brigade having been confined to playing water on adjoining

buildings. All of the synagogues were irreparably gutted by flames, and the walls of the two that are in the close proximity of the consulate are now being razed. The blackened frames have been centers of attraction during the past week of terror for eloquently silent and bewildered crowds. One of the largest clothing stores in the heart of the city was destroyed by flames from incendiary bombs, only the charred walls and gutted roof having been left standing. As was the case with the synagogues, no attempts on the part of the fire brigade were made to extinguish the fire, although apparently there was a certain amount of apprehension for adjacent property, for the walls of a coffee house next door were covered with asbestos and sprayed by the doughty firemen. It is extremely difficult to believe, but the owners of the clothing store were actually charged with setting the fire and on that basis were dragged from their beds at 6 A.M. and clapped into prison.

Tactics which closely approached the ghoulish took place at the Jewish cemetery where the temple was fired together with a building occupied by care-takers, tombstones uprooted and graves violated. Eye witnesses considered reliable report that ten corpses were left unburied at this cemetery for a week's time because all grave diggers and cemetery attendants had been arrested.

Ferocious as was the violation of property, the most hideous phase of the so-called "spontaneous" action, has been the wholesale arrest and transportation to concentration camps of male German Jews between the ages of sixteen and sixty, as well as Jewish men without

citizenship. This has been taking place daily since the night of horror. This office has no way of accurately checking the numbers of such arrests, but there is very little question but what they have gone into several thousands in Leipzig alone. Having demolished dwellings and hurled most of the moveable effects to the streets, the insatiably sadistic perpetrators threw many of the trembling inmates into a small stream that flows through the Zoological Park, commanding horrified spectators to spit at them, defile them with mud and jeer at their plight. The latter incident has been repeatedly corroborated by German witnesses who were nauseated in telling the tale. The slightest manifestation of sympathy evoked a positive fury on the part of the perpetrators, and the crowd was powerless to do anything but turn horror-stricken eyes from the scene of abuse, or leave the vicinity. These tactics were carried out the entire morning of November 10th without police intervention and they were applied to men, women and children.

There is much evidence of physical violence, including several deaths. At least half a dozen cases have been personally observed, victims with bloody, badly bruised faces having fled to this office, believing that as refugees their desire to emigrate could be expedited here. As a matter of fact this consulate has been a bedlam of humanity for the past ten days, most of these visitors being desperate women, as their husbands and sons had been taken off to concentration camps.

Similarly violent procedure was applied throughout this consular district, the amount of havoc wrought depending

upon the number of Jewish establishments or persons involved. It is understood that in many of the smaller communities even more relentless methods were employed than was the case in the cities. Reports have been received from Weissenfels to the effect that the few Jewish families there are experiencing great difficulty in purchasing food. It is reported that three Aryan professors of the University of Jena have been arrested and taken off to concentration camps because they had voiced disapproval of this insidious drive against mankind.

Sources of information

Personal observation and interviews.

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